

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 251640Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6272

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 6428

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AU

SUBJECT: PEOPLE'S PARTY EXECUTIVE NOMINATES NEW LEADERS

REF: VIENNA 6372

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. AS EXPECTED (REFTEL), EXECUTIVE BOARD OF AUSTRIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (OVP) HAS VOTED (33 TO ZERO, WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS) TO NOMINATE DR. JOSEF TAUS AS OVP CHAIRMAN AND CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE. DR. ERHARD BUSEK, 34-YEAR-OLD GENERAL SECRETARY OF OVP ECONOMIC LEAGUE, WAS NOMINATED (32 TO ZERO, THREE ABSTENTIONS) TO REPLACE 48-YEAR-OLD OVP GENERAL SECRETARY DR. HERBERT KHOHLMAIER. KOHLMAIER HAD OFFERED TO STEP DOWN. GIVEN OVERWHELMING EXECUTIVE BOARD SUPPORT, ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINEES BY EXTRAORDINARY PARTY CONGRESS
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JULY 31 SEEMS CERTAIN.

2. RESPONDING TO PRESS FOLLOWING NOMINATIONS, TAUS DISAGREED WITH CONTENTION THAT CHOICE OF ECONOMISTS FOR TWO TOP OVP JOBS WOULD RESULT IN INORDINATE OVP CONCERN WITH ECONOMIC MATTERS. AUSTRIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION WAS OF OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE TO COUNTRY, TAUS CLAIMED, SINCE, ALTHOUGH AUSTRIA WAS NEUTRAL COUNTRY AND NEUTRALITY WAS NOT POLITICAL ISSUE, ABILITY TO MAINTAIN NEUTRAL COURSE DEPENDED ESSENTIALLY UPON MAINTAINING HIGH DEGREE OF INTERNAL ECONOMIC, AND THUS POLITICAL, STABILITY. SERIOUSNESS OF CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED, HE SAID, AND HE AGREED THEREFORE WITH LATE OVP CHAIRMAN SCHLEINZER THAT CLOSE COOPERATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, NOT CONFRONTATION, WAS NECESSARY TO SOLVE THEM.

3. TAUS DENIED THAT KOHLMAINER WAS "VICTIM" OF SCHLEINZER'S UNTIMELY DEMISE. HE SAID KOHLMAYER WAS OVP'S TOP SPECIALIST ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS, WHICH WAS SECOND MOST IMPORTANT AREA OF CONCERN IN AUSTRIA, AND WOULD NOW DEVOTE HIMSELF FULL-TIME TO SOCIAL ISSUES. BECAUSE OVP HAD BEEN PLACED IN EXTRAORDINARY POSITION BY SCHLEINZER'S DEATH, TAUS SAID, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT EACH MAN SERVE WHERE HE COULD BE MOST USEFUL, BUSEK'S ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TALENTS MADE HIM BEST MAN FOR OVP'S TOP ADMINISTRATIVE POST. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. COMMENT: BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. BUSEK'S NOMINATION PUTS STILL GREATER ACCENT ON YOUTH IN OVP LEADERSHIP. BUSEK HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY CONCERNED WITH PROBLEMS OF MIDDLE CLASS IN MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY, AND COMPARED TO VOP-LABOR LEAGUE ORIENTATION OF TAUS, IS MORE CONSERVATIVE IN OUTLOOK. LIKE TAUS, HE IS EXTREMELY BRIGHT, ASSERTIVE, AND DECISIVE. BUT SINCE HE ALSO HAS STRONG BACKGROUND IN ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS, FOCUS OF OVP ON ECONOMIC ISSUES IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN MAY WELL BE EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED THAN ANTICIPATED (VIENNA 5706). SOCIALISTS, IT APPEARS FROM PRESS, WILL NOW PUT EVEN GREATER STRESS ON EXPERIENCED LEADERSHIP
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OF SOCIALISTS VERSUS RELATIVE INEXPERIENCE OF TAUS, BUSEK AND OVP'S SO-CALLED "YOUNG LIONS."BUCHANAN

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